

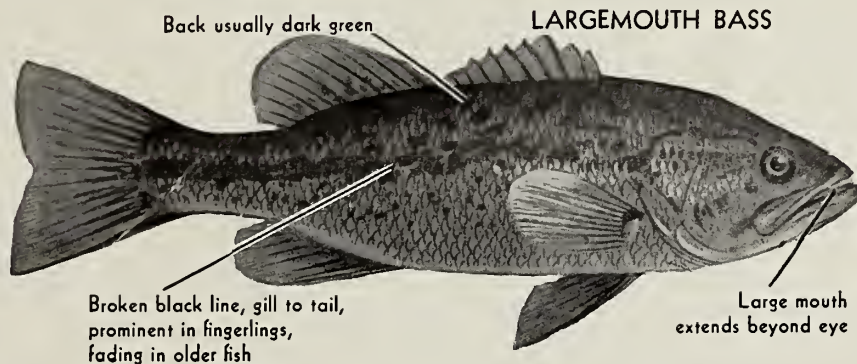
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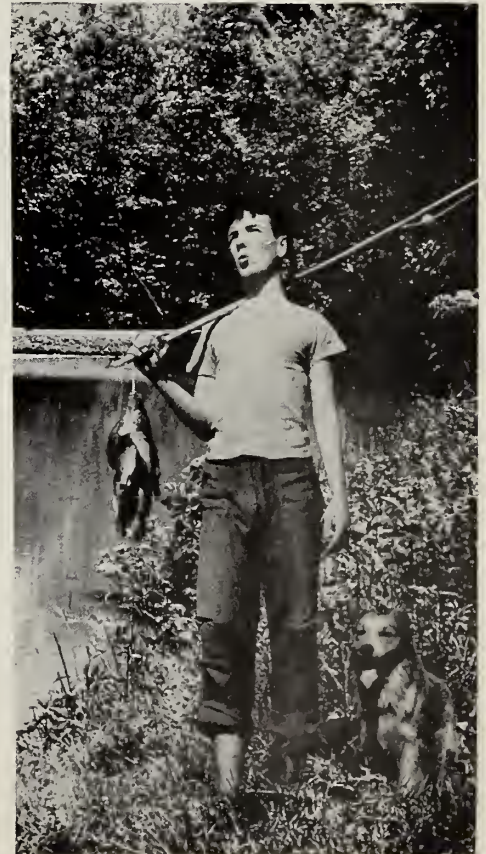
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

UPPER MISSISSIPPI REGION, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

Manage Farm Ponds for Bass and Bluegills



A fertilized pond may produce five times as many pounds of fish as an unfertilized pond.



A FARM pond, properly built and managed, can produce over 200 pounds of eatable fish per acre per year. Ponds stocked with the right number of large-mouth black bass and bluegill sunfish have the best chance for successful fish production.

Farm ponds provide erosion control and water conservation. A good water supply on every farm is important for livestock, irrigation, spraying, and fire protection. Well-managed ponds also provide cover and food for waterfowl, upland game, insect-eating songbirds, and fur-bearing animals.

HOW TO MANAGE FARM PONDS

Protect the pond from fire and grazing.—Fire and livestock destroy the permanent shrubs and grasses which help to strain the silt from the water entering the pond. Cattle may contaminate the water and thus create a source of disease.

Deepen the edges, if shallow, to control water weeds and mosquitoes and to improve fishing. A good pond should be 3 feet deep within 10 feet of the shore line.

Plant trees, shrubs, and grasses around the pond to make a useful "wild" area for all forms of wildlife. Keep trees and shrubs off the dike and away from pond edge.

Stock with fingerling fish at the rate of 1,000 bluegill sunfish and 100 large-mouth black bass per acre for fertilized ponds. Use only one-half this number for ponds not fertilized.

Fertilize every 2 weeks during warm weather until the water becomes so clouded with microscopic plants that the bottom cannot be seen in 12 inches of water. Fertilization, once started, must be done regularly. Use one of the following mixtures and apply at the rate shown per surface acre:

- (1) 100 pounds of 8-8-4 or 8-8-8 fertilizer.
- (2) 70 pounds of 2-12-6 plus 33 pounds of ammonium sulfate or 20 pounds of ammonium nitrate.
- (3) 50 pounds of 2-16-4 plus 35 pounds of ammonium sulfate or 22 pounds of ammonium nitrate.
- (4) 70 pounds of 4-12-4 plus 26 pounds of ammonium sulfate or 16 pounds of ammonium nitrate.
- (5) 40 pounds of 0-20-10 plus 40 pounds of ammonium sulfate or 25 pounds of ammonium nitrate.

Control weeds.—Fertilizers will control under-water weeds by increasing the growth of microscopic plants which shade out the submerged plants. Shallow-water plants, such as cattail, and floating leaf plants, such as lilies, can be controlled by pulling.

Fish the pond hard.—Starting the second year after stocking, fish must be taken to allow the remaining fish to grow. It is impossible to overfish a pond with hook and line.

Mow grass on the dike to control woodchucks and muskrats.

Avoid winter-killing of fish by removing heavy snow from at least half of the pond or by lowering the water level a few inches below the ice.

Drain and restock.—Ponds which are not productive of fish of usable kinds and sizes after 3 years should be drained and restocked.

